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Chairman: Mr. Zackheos ..... (Cyprus)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/54/20, A/C.4/54/8, A/CONF.184/6)

1. **The Chairman** said that significant progress in the development of space science and technology had made it possible to exploit outer space and to understand more about the origin of the universe, and its future. International cooperation among 16 nations was leading to the construction of the international space station, marking the dawn of an era of living and working in outer space.

2. Space science and technology had important practical applications for daily life, including worldwide satellite communications, management of land and ocean resources, prediction of climate changes and early warning of disasters. In order to make the benefits of space science and technology available to everyone, international cooperation was essential. The United Nations, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, had worked to promote cooperation in outer space, and had established a legal regime governing space activities which reflected the collective will of Member States to carry out space activities for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interests of all countries.

3. It was currently necessary to build on that success and to meet the new challenges arising from rapid developments in space activities. Space science and technology must shape a better world for all, as the potential for sustainable development through space applications had not yet been fully utilized in many developing countries, where the tools provided by space science and technology were most needed.

4. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had yielded successful results, particularly for developing countries. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development was intended to serve as the agenda for all Member States, international organizations and industry to take concrete and coordinated action to address global challenges.

5. The Technical Forum of UNISPACE III had provided a unique opportunity for policy makers, managers of aerospace companies, scientists and engineers as well as university students to exchange views on various space-related issues and to contribute to the substantive work of the Conference. The Space Generation Forum, a group of young professionals and university students, had contributed greatly to the success of the Conference. That should provide a unique model for forging partnerships with civil society, in particular with non-governmental organizations and industry.

6. **Mr. Rao** (India), Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, said that the practical benefits of space technology applications touched virtually every facet of human endeavour and had become the best hope of achieving rapid socio-economic development and improved quality of life on a sustainable basis. The United Nations had made very significant contributions towards the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. As the world had moved from an era of confrontation to an era of cooperation, greater emphasis had been placed on the practical applications of space science and technology for human development. Space technology applications must benefit all countries, in particular developing countries, to enable them to meet the basic needs of their people.

7. Rapid advances in space technology, globalization of economic activity and the increasing commercialization of space technology applications had provided a strong motivation to hold UNISPACE III, an event which had marked the beginning of a new era of space for human development. The Conference, of which he had been elected President, had been held in Vienna, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, open to all Member States. Its report was in document A/CONF.184/6. There had been more than 2,500 participants, including delegates from 100 States as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, industry and research institutions.

8. UNISPACE III had had two primary objectives: to promote effective use of space solutions to address regional and global problems, and to strengthen the capabilities of Member States, particularly developing countries. Consideration had been given to the status of space science and technology and the challenges of the future; ways and means of promoting space activities, particularly in developing countries, for achieving sustainable integrated development; international space law and the promotion of international cooperation. The Conference had identified common goals to be pursued and action to maximize space benefits for all humanity.

9. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted by consensus, reflected the commitment of all participating States to integrate advances in space science and technology in the agenda for socio-

economic development towards the establishment of a truly equitable global village.

10. Among the other recommendations of the Conference was a recommendation that the General Assembly should extend the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction for one more decade, in view of recent advances in space technology which could provide significant support to the work of the disaster management community.

11. An important contribution had been made by the Technical Forum, at which high-level policy makers, managers of aerospace companies, directors of research institutions, members of non-governmental organizations and university students had discussed various aspects of space-related activities, and produced innovative proposals, some of which had provided a basis for recommendations by the Conference. The integral involvement of the space industry in many activities of the Conference had been crucial to its success. The Space Generation Forum, organized by and for young professionals and university students, had presented unique recommendations and proposals, some of which had been included in the Vienna Declaration.

12. UNISPACE III had demonstrated that, under the umbrella of the United Nations, governments and civil society could work effectively to address issues of concern to all people; that should set an excellent precedent for the participation of all sections of civil society, including industry, as important partners of the United Nations.

13. The cost of organizing the Conference had been kept at a minimum. Since no specific conference budget had been allocated to UNISPACE III, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, had had to identify innovative ways of securing resources for the Conference. That experience could be useful for future global conferences.

14. The real impact of UNISPACE III could be judged only when its recommendations were translated into concrete action. The Conference could not be regarded as a success until the people of the developing countries were given access to space science and technology. Member States had a responsibility to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

15. Introducing the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/54/20), he said that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had made a major contribution to the international efforts on space debris and had finalized its technical report on the subject. The Legal Subcommittee had continued its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, and had established a working group to review the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space, which had recommended measures to achieve full adherence to those instruments.

16. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had reached agreement on a new approach to setting the agendas of the Subcommittees that would enable both Subcommittees to consider, in a flexible manner, various issues arising from the rapidly expanding space activities.

17. Space science and technology could be powerful tools for achieving rapid socio-economic and cultural development. Yet there was a growing disparity in the quality of life between the rich and the poor. More than a quarter of the people in developing countries still did not have access to life's basic necessities; their problems were further exacerbated by explosive population growth, rampant poverty, over-depletion of resources and degradation of the environment. Economic globalization in the technologically advanced world had resulted in further marginalization of countries with scarce resources and could lead to severe social distress and civil strife. Sustainable development was crucial for maintaining peace and security in many parts of the world. With the use of space science and technology, humanity could face the challenge of harmonizing development to meet the basic needs of the people and provide educational opportunities for all, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

18. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) said that UNISPACE III had achieved significant results; support must now be given to the implementation of regional recommendations and cooperation in the sphere of technology. At the Conference, Colombia had stressed the need for a global cooperation model that would achieve real benefits for all countries, especially developing countries. It had described some national achievements based on the use of space technology. Technological resources were invaluable at the regional level, for example in the prevention and reduction of natural disasters. Concrete, viable and effective projects should be generated for developing countries by United Nations specialized agencies, developed countries and providers of space technology, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/122. In 1998, at the regional preparatory conference, the Latin American countries had made specific proposals on cooperation in the region, based on national capacities.

19. Access to technology must be linked with the development of science and technologies applicable to individual requirements. Advances in international space law, with clear rules based on equity, would make it possible to expand possibilities for participation. That equity should be reflected in the allocation of and access to frequency bands and geostationary satellite orbits, taking into account in particular the needs of developing countries. Colombia hoped that work on the definition and delimitation of outer space and on the utilization of the geostationary orbit would be continued by the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space until a solution was found to satisfy all concerned. It welcomed the restructuring of the agendas of the two Subcommittees, and the review of the status of the international legal instruments governing outer space. Greater dynamism in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would enable it to face the needs in the area of space science and technology and development of space law reflecting the progress of space technology.

20. The implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, including initiatives such as the establishment of a voluntary fund that would be used to finance the activities of regional centres for space science and technology education, would require periodic follow-up and concerted efforts to achieve progress. In the new century, the objective should be to achieve a more equitable world, in which all would participate in the advances of humanity.

21. **Mr. Pietikäinen** (Finland) spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, aligned themselves with his statement.

22. UNISPACE III had been the first global conference of the United Nations in which industry and civil society had participated as full partners of governments, reflecting the increasing economic use of outer space and the rapidly growing importance of private companies in that area as well as the heightened interest of citizens in matters relating to outer space. The involvement of the private and commercial sectors in the Technical Forum showed that industry was playing a key role in the development of space technology and its applications, and the exchange of views between governments, the scientific community and business and industry had provided opportunities to forge mutually beneficial relationships. In addition, the Space Generation Forum had given young space professionals an opportunity to express their hopes and concerns about the uses of outer space. "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" and its related action points had been the most important outcome of the Conference and offered a framework for cooperation in the utilization of space technology as a tool for sustainable development.

23. International space activity was undergoing a period of great change in the areas of practical applications and the development of commercial markets and the list of innovations was impressive. Europe was a major actor in the field of space activities, with important programmes being implemented by European States, the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA).

24. Multilateral financial institutions and States must facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration. Proper implementation would significantly narrow the gap between the developed and the developing nations. The private sector was also a potential partner in future activities and its participation in relevant projects should be encouraged.

25. He noted with satisfaction the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/54/20) on its forty-second session, held from 14 to 16 July 1999. He noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had concluded its three-year investigation into the issue of space debris. It was clear that the amount of existing debris needed to be reduced and the creation of new space debris needed to be limited in order to protect outer space.

26. The European Union had supported the Committee's reform efforts in the past and in that context he welcomed the agreement on the restructuring of the agendas of the two Subcommittees reached at the forty-second session and looked forward to continuing efforts for the peaceful uses of outer space in the post-UNISPACE III era.

27. **Mr. Miyamoto** (Japan) acknowledged the increasingly important role of COPUOS in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space. By encouraging research, disseminating information and establishing a legal framework to deal with the exploration of outer space, the Committee had enabled the international community to benefit from the uses of outer space. He therefore welcomed the progress made by COPUOS as well as UNISPACE III that year, including the adoption of the Vienna Declaration. The convening of UNISPACE III, with the participation of government and private sector representatives, had been a landmark achievement. He was especially pleased that international cooperation in Earth observation activities had been discussed extensively with

a view to addressing global environmental problems while responding to the needs of both developed and developing countries.

28. His Government's basic policies for the development of space for peaceful purposes were: the promotion of creative scientific research from a long-term perspective, the application of the results of space development to wider areas of society in order to meet social needs, cost-effective space activities, active international space cooperation, emphasis on unmanned systems with a view to enhancing their reliability and level of sophistication while continuing to contribute to manned systems within the framework of international cooperation, the coordinated development of Japan's space-related industries and the preservation of the space environment by addressing the issue of space debris.

29. Japan had undertaken numerous space activities and was an active participant in international cooperation for the peaceful utilization of outer space. Continued international cooperation in the use of outer space for the benefit of mankind was essential and his country was committed to playing an active role in advancing space technology and promoting international cooperation.

30. **Mr. Ri Kyong Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) expressed satisfaction with the Vienna Declaration and its recommendations adopted at UNISPACE III. However, two major challenges remained before the Declaration could be implemented.

31. First, countries which possessed space technology tended to monopolize the exploration and use of outer space for their own benefit while developing countries such as his own faced serious constraints which aggravated their poor economic situation and increased their debt. The right of all countries, in particular the developing countries, to explore space must be respected and they must be encouraged to participate actively in the peaceful use of space. International cooperation to that end must be strengthened and the relevant international organizations must take concrete measures, such as technology transfer, financial support and scientific and technical training, in favour of the developing countries. The creation of a special fund to assist developing countries to participate in space activities and the designation of the 4 to 10 October of each year as World Space Week were positive steps.

32. Secondly, the growing militarization of outer space, such as the use of military satellites violated and threatened the sovereignty of States and he deplored the escalation of that militarization by some countries which were endeavouring to develop anti-missile defences. He suggested that the Legal Subcommittee should devote more attention to the development of measures to prevent the militarization of space.

33. He noted that his country had placed a satellite in orbit and was in a position to participate actively in the peaceful exploration of outer space. It would continue to develop its space technology to contribute to mankind's common heritage while participating actively in international cooperation efforts.

34. **Mr. Tiwathia** (India) expressed satisfaction that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued to function well. UNISPACE III had been a success and he was gratified that an Indian scientist had been elected Chairman of the Conference. The Conference had taken stock of developments in space science and applications, explored new areas of cooperation, considered the changing economic and political environment which offered new opportunities for international cooperation and studied the constraints and issues faced by developing countries in building national capacities to benefit from space technology as well as ways to involve the private sector more closely in the process.

35. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development outlined the key strategies to address global challenges in that sector and should be given priority, including the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations fund for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The relevant international organizations should support the implementation of those recommendations and COPUOS should develop a work plan to promote and accelerate the implementation process.

36. He expressed great concern over the growing risks posed by space debris. His country cooperated actively with the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) and the international community to mitigate the effects of debris. The report on space debris prepared by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should be widely disseminated and that Subcommittee should continue to seek effective solutions to regulate space debris.

37. Space technology played an important role in accelerating the socio-economic development of all countries, particularly developing countries, and India's space programme emphasized applications which benefited society as a whole. India had launched its own and other countries' satellites and data from Indian remote-sensing satellites were made available to the international community.

38. His delegation continued to explore ways to strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The United Nations affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, located in India since 1995, had enabled scholars from 25 countries in the region to share in space technology.

39. UNISPACE III had provided a unique opportunity for the global community to enhance the role of space in global development and well-being. However, in order effectively to address the concerns of developing countries, a balance must be maintained between commercialism and larger societal priorities. International cooperation in outer space could meet broader humanitarian needs such as disaster management and help address the problems of development. UNISPACE III must serve as a springboard to enhance global cooperation which alone would ensure the accomplishment of the goals collectively adopted at Vienna.

40. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the space exploration effort and the growing use of space-related technology for peaceful purposes were beneficial to humanity as a whole. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had done admirable work in that connection by anchoring knowledge obtained from the exploration of space in a set of international principles relating to the use of that knowledge. It was regrettable that programmes aimed at the militarization of space were still being undertaken.

41. His Government's conviction that space research and exploration could produce solutions to various problems on Earth had been demonstrated by, *inter alia*, the flight of a Saudi Arabian astronaut and the participation of the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology in the work of UNISPACE III.

42. The Conference had produced a number of recommendations of interest to developing countries, notably with respect to scientific and technological applications, and it was to be hoped that those recommendations would be implemented.

43. His delegation looked forward to enhanced regional and international cooperation in space-related activities, as the potential spin-off benefits for the developing countries in such areas as agriculture, industry, medicine and remote sensing were substantial. Space research, in fact, was a means to economic growth and sustainable development, whence the crucial importance of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

44. **Mr. Gao Feng** (China) said that "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" adopted by UNISPACE III and reflected in the report of the Conference (A/CONF.184/6) was a document of historic significance that would help space science and technology to serve peaceful purposes, increase international cooperation in outer space and promote development and progress, particularly in the developing countries. His delegation concurred with the recommendations included in the Declaration, in particular on the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations fund for implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III on designating the week of 4 to 10 October World Space Week and on a five-year review and evaluation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. He commended the Declaration to the Committee and the General Assembly for adoption.

45. He gave the Committee an overview of progress in Chinese space technology since the founding of the People's Republic, noting in particular that the Long March rocket had been launched successfully 15 times since 1996 and that China had developed, manufactured and launched, on its own, over 40 satellites with economic, scientific, technological and cultural applications. In some major areas of space science and technology, China had reached the highest international level, and space science and technology would continue to play an important role in the modernization of the country.

46. He stressed that China's tremendous progress in the space arena had been entirely the result of its own efforts and also that the task of modernization facing the country remained arduous.

47. China would be emphasizing inexpensive, non-toxic, non-polluting, reliable and large rockets with a view to launching high-capacity geostationary and other communication satellites for public use and gradually establishing a system that included also long-lived, reliable meteorological and resource satellites to meet the needs of the Chinese economy. It was developing manned space flight also, and hoped to achieve it early in the twenty-first century.

48. He stressed that all nations enjoyed equal rights to explore and use outer space, and that such activities should promote cooperation between peoples and better the lives and development of those peoples. Space activities should also contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the survival of humankind. China therefore opposed any monopoly or militarization of outer space and favoured increased international cooperation in outer space based on peaceful uses, equality, mutual benefit, mutual learning and shared development.

49. In such cooperation, links with developed space Powers were important, but China would endeavour to expand also its cooperation with other, developing nations. China's recent successful launch of a joint Sino-Brazilian global resource satellite was an example of such South-South cooperation in space, which China would expand the better to serve humankind.

50. **Mr. Schaffhauser** (France) associated his delegation with the statement by the representative of Finland speaking on behalf of the European Union, and stressed that UNISPACE III had been important for the expanded use of space technology, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries.

51. The report of the Conference (A/CONF.184/6) was a solid foundation for the future work not only of the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs but also of States. Implementing the recommendations in the report would require a long-term effort not only by those countries facing the problems of development but also by the countries with the technology to meet the needs expressed at UNISPACE III and by the institutions capable of funding development projects reflecting the priorities which the Conference had highlighted. To be effective, international cooperation would demand an effort from everyone.

52. He noted that at the Conference a joint European Space Agency (ESA) — *Centre national d'études spatiales* (CNES) proposal had been made to promote international cooperation in the management of natural disasters, where Earth observation satellites could provide the responsible authorities with data to supplement information from other systems. To that end, ESA and CNES had announced that they would coordinate their space capabilities more closely and pool their satellite capacity to meet the demands of such authorities. The ESA-CNES initiative would supplement the work done in bodies such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites.

53. The process of adapting existing rules and developing new ones for outer space should continue within a United Nations framework: there were important regulatory issues to decide. Specifically, developments in outer space activities were posing the problem of how to tailor the existing legal provisions to the technologies that had been developed. As a common problem, it should be dealt with in a universal body such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, initially through its Legal Subcommittee.

54. Countries had a moral duty to take rapid action to reduce the production of space debris. In that connection, he recalled the proposal (A/AC.105/L.221 and Corr.1) to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-second session to the effect that, as the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had finalized its technical report on the issue (A/AC.105/720), the Legal Subcommittee should be requested to express its views on the question of space debris and the applicability of existing treaties to it.

55. **Mr. Cassapoglou** (Greece) said that his delegation also fully supported the statement by the representative of Finland speaking on behalf of the European Union.

56. He himself was speaking also on behalf of the steering committee of a network of space technology and research institutes in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Turkey and Greece — one analogous to the regional centres established under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications — which had just been set up at a series of meetings in Sofia. He thanked the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the other commissions and committees involved for their support and requested further support from the United Nations system in carrying forward the network initiative, which could play a very important role.

57. He supported the position of the representative of France concerning measures to deal with natural disasters and informed the Committee that he had attended a recent meeting between the International Telecommunication Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on ensuring the entry into force of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. Members of the Committee should urge their Governments to sign and ratify the Convention, which would be a very important instrument for mitigating not only natural but also anthropogenic disasters.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.